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Disarmament and non-proliferation education: promoting cooperation with civil society towards a world without nuclear weapons

Joint working paper submitted by Japan and the United Nations University

I. Introduction

1. Japan and the United Nations University (UNU), headquartered in Japan, welcome the renewed global attention to achieving a peaceful and safe world without nuclear weapons. We need to seize this growing momentum to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For this purpose, it is crucial to provide adequate knowledge of the immense destructive power of nuclear weapons and to increase awareness and understanding of the dangers of their proliferation. Disarmament and non-proliferation education, therefore, plays a significant role in this respect. Japan believes that it has the moral responsibility to convey to all people around the world the horrific consequences of nuclear devastation based on its first-hand experience and has been at the forefront of such endeavours with a strong determination that these experiences shall never be repeated.

2. However, the task is so enormous that Governments alone cannot take on this role. We need action at both the grassroots and the governmental levels. The report of the Secretary-General on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/63/158) stated: "Some of the most effective past and current efforts involve partnerships among Governments, international, regional and civil society organizations. They can serve as a model for future activities." Japan's working paper entitled "Disarmament and non-proliferation education" (NPT/CONF.2010/PC.II/WP.9) also alluded to this point, stating: "Civil society is already active in recording, compiling, preserving and further disseminating information using various tools, including narratives, visual media and other forms of communication. Governments should support, where necessary and appropriate, such efforts by civil society."

3. Japan and UNU, recognizing the invaluable contribution made by civil society to date, submit this joint working paper in order to underscore the importance of coordinated and sustained cooperation with civil society in promoting disarmament

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and non-proliferation education and to examine ways to enhance such cooperation, with a view to strengthening Non-Proliferation Treaty norms and taking concrete steps to move towards a world without nuclear weapons.

II. Necessity for sustained and stronger cooperation with civil society

4. Sustained and stronger cooperation between Governments and civil society is essential to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education for the following reasons.

5. First, civil society can play a dual role: it can be a public watchdog and critic, where necessary, exerting influence on Governments to meet people's expectations, or it can act as a partner and supporter for Governments' actions in the furtherance of a common cause.

6. Second, there is global recognition of the role played by civil society in generating public awareness, mobilizing public opinion, taking creative initiatives and assisting governmental efforts in various tasks, including in disarmament and non-proliferation education. Civil society has engaged in a full range of society-wide and multidirectional education activities, which cut across generational lines.

7. Finally, the process of globalization has made civil society a constant partner of Governments in addressing global issues such as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The role of civil society thus has to be taken into serious consideration by policymakers.

III. Engaging and working with civil society

8. In the light of the necessity described above, we should first look at what kind of cooperation has been carried out in the past. The following are a few examples of activities initiated by the Japanese Government and UNU in recent years that engaged civil society.

A. Japanese Government initiatives

9. Various activities have been carried out in collaboration with non-governmental organizations to pass on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to people around the world and to future generations. Specific activities include:

Seminars engaging civil society

Japan co-organized seminars on the sidelines of the Preparatory Committees in 2008 and 2009, with the participation of non-governmental organizations and citizens including *Hibakusha* (atomic bomb victims) from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Last year, Member States and a wide range of participants from civil society exchanged views on the theme "Practical ways and tools to raise public awareness through education and its role in strengthening the NPT".

Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb exhibitions

Japan has supported a number of efforts by local governments, universities, non-governmental organizations and various organizations to organize exhibitions relating to atomic bombs in foreign countries.

10. Disseminating information on current disarmament issues to the general public and raising public awareness is also an important task for the Government. Since 1989, Japan has sponsored the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, which is open to the public and held in a different local city in Japan. Last year's Conference, which was held in Niigata City, devoted one session to the discussion of the role of civil society and the media.

11. Governments can create opportunities for non-governmental organizations to initiate discussion on specific topics. In September 2008, the Governments of Australia and Japan launched an independent initiative, called the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, involving outstanding individuals from around the world. The Commission engaged in discussions with representatives of non-governmental organizations and industries and produced a report in December 2009 with action-oriented recommendations towards a world free of nuclear weapons, which will involve all relevant players, including policymakers, think tanks and civil societies alike, in their implementation.

B. UNU initiatives

12. UNU integrates research, education and dissemination on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and cooperates closely with civil society organizations in most of its activities. The following are a few examples:

(a) UNU has completed several projects that illustrate its high-quality, policy-relevant research and the priority it gives to civil society engagement and to disarmament and non-proliferation. Among its most recent projects are: *Engaging Civil Society in Global Governance* (Eds. S. Cheema and V. Popovski, UNU Press 2010) and *The United Nations and Nuclear Orders* (Eds. J. Boulden, R. Thakur and T. Weiss, UNU Press 2009).

(b) UNU addresses disarmament and non-proliferation issues in its educational and capacity-building activities, including in the curricula for some of the new UNU postgraduate degree programmes, which will soon accept their first postgraduate students.

(c) UNU organizes academic conferences and forums on a regular basis, facilitating interaction between Governments and civil society organizations. The growing networks of UNU Research and Training Centres and Programmes and UNU Associated Institutions are partnering with universities and think tanks around the world — effectively with the global academic civil society — to identify and recommend policy solutions on pressing global problems.

(d) The UNU Institute for Sustainability and Peace, based in Tokyo, has been working closely with Hiroshima University to engage in peace education and enhance a culture of peace. The Institute's staff supported and participated in the International Network of Universities Student Seminar on Global Citizenship, tackling the theme of the legality of nuclear weapons. The Institute has also been supporting and co-organizing workshops and events of the Hiroshima Peacebuilders

Center under the Program for Human Resource Development in Asia for Peacebuilding, which is commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Through these activities, UNU continues to bring global and contemporary perspectives into Japanese debates on nuclear weapons, and helps raise global awareness of nuclear-related problems by engaging with students and researchers worldwide.

IV. Proposals for further action

13. The above examples illustrate the benefits and synergies gained through cooperating with civil society for a non-nuclear world. There is still a lot of room for strengthening and improving this cooperation. Governments can learn more from civil society's innovative ideas and tools used for nuclear disarmament education. Civil society, on the other hand, can benefit from working with Governments, for instance, in gaining increased access to information and other resources. Civil society can also support governmental efforts in capacity-building and education. In addition, Governments and civil society can cooperate more in using modern information and communication technologies and innovative methods for education. Japan and UNU, therefore, propose the following for further action.

14. Japan and UNU will initiate dialogue among Member States of the United Nations and members of civil society on how to enhance cooperation between Governments and civil society in strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation education. Such dialogue will be instrumental in identifying tools to inject a culture of peace into educational activities worldwide. The United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, to be held in Japan in 2010, will provide a timely opportunity for such dialogue.

15. The dialogue should lead to a global forum that brings together civil society and Governments, compiles best practices and ideally produces a declaration and a joint plan for capacity-building for enhanced disarmament and non-proliferation education.

16. To integrate modern technologies and innovative methods for education into traditional education, joint educational activities between Governments and civil society should prepare joint educational manuals and materials. In particular, considering the ageing of the *Hibakusha*, the efforts need to be redoubled to digitally record their testimonies and to disseminate them to future generations by employing modern technologies.

V. Conclusion

17. With this joint paper, Japan and UNU express their commitment to work cooperatively with civil society and appeal to the international community to take concerted actions to strengthen partnerships with civil society in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education and make progress towards a world without nuclear weapons.